



**State of Connecticut**  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
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**Testimony of State Representative Matthew D. Ritter (D-1<sup>st</sup> District)**

Dear Chairpersons Coleman and Fox and Ranking Members Kissel and Hetherington:

I come before you today to testify in support of Raised **Bill No. 364** an “**An Act Concerning Traffic Stop Information.**” This bill is otherwise known as an amendment to the Penn Act.

I first became involved in this issue in 2010 as a member of the Hartford City Council. At the time, a constituent and friend, David Samuels, approached me about whether the City of Hartford was complying with the provisions of the Penn Act which required it to collect and report data regarding traffic stops within the City. Upon my election to the House of Representatives, I began working with David and other community activists to look at ways in which the Penn Act could be strengthened.

I am here today to thank the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus, the administration and the leaders of this committee for continuing their efforts to strengthen anti-profiling laws in the State. Raised Bill No. 364 goes a long way towards ensuring that municipalities will collect and report data regarding traffic stops so that we as a State have a better idea of whether profiling is occurring in municipal police departments. Obviously, the recent situation in East Haven and the report by Matthew Kaufmann of the Hartford Courant demonstrate that there is a need for profiling data to be collected and reviewed by the State.

However, I am also here to stress two points with regards to this bill. One, it is important that the review and oversight committee which will review the data that is submitted by municipal police departments contains individuals who are not just state or legislative employees and who represent potentially affected communities. I believe that having community representation will help to ensure that the data review process is transparent and it will also provide a community link regarding matters of profiling which is very important.

Second, I also think that the receipt which is given to a motorist should contain different language which advises the motorist of what department they may contact if they feel that they

have been a victim of profiling. Currently, the bill provides that the motorist may "file a complaint with the appropriate law enforcement agency." I want to be sure that the bill is not simply advising the motorist that they can contact the relevant municipal police department regarding the stop. There are too many instances in which the motorist might feel intimidated to report to the same police department which just stopped him or her and there are also examples of municipal police departments failing to prevent profiling even when made aware that it is occurring. Therefore, perhaps adding clearer language to the bill which provides, for example, that the motorist may confidentially contact CHRO or the State's Attorney is a better option for reporting profiling.

I thank the Judiciary Committee for its time this morning. This is an important subject to me and the District for which I have the great honor to represent. The amendments to this law are critical to ensuring that motorists in our State are treated equally and fairly regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, age or sexual orientation. I hope that the committee will consider my comments here today and I am glad to answer any questions.